DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 132 633 CS 501 576

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TITLE Values Clarification and Speech Communication.
PUB DATE 76
NOTE 17p.; Reprint from the "Massachusetts Communication Journal," Fall 1976

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.83 HC-$1.67 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS *Communication Skills; Educational Philosophy; *Effective Teaching; Higher Education; *Interpersonal Relationship; Speech; Speech Skills; Student Evaluation; *Values; Verbal Communication
IDENTIFIERS *Speech Communication; *Values Clarification

ABSTRACT

In the speech communication classroom, values clarification activities can be used as motivational techniques and as methods for teaching interpersonal communication skills. Learning to use communication skills can be a values-clarifying process in itself and can occur in speech areas viewed as primarily cognitive: argumentation, persuasion, discussion, and so on. In addition, teachers must be able to apply effective interpersonal skills to their own teaching and to recognize that many of these skills will be for listening, responding, and questioning, as well as for informing. Finally, student evaluation can be approached using the principles of personal growth and can range from brief feedback to a complex set of criterion-referenced assignments or contracts. In short, values clarification can be considered a technique whose impact is already discernible in the texts and teaching of speech communication. (Author/KS)

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ED132633

Values Clarification and Speech Communication

by

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Over the past several years, speech communication education has shifted its primary emphasis from public speaking to a broader field of studies including interpersonal communication. Recent interest in interpersonal communication parallels increased attention to the application of humanistic psychology to classroom learning. The purpose of this paper is to explore the relationship between one of the most celebrated areas of the humanistic education movement, values clarification, and some current emphases in speech communication education. Many popular speech communication texts directly incorporate activities found in values clarification literature, or in a general way, encourage students to discover, develop, and act on their values.[1] This article explores some of the goals, student learning activities, teacher methods, and evaluation procedures of both values clarification and interpersonal communication. My concern will not be with conceptual differences or criticisms of either area, but with a framework from which we in speech communication might consider the work of a related area whose impact is noticeable in our texts and teaching.

For centuries philosophy and religion have been concerned with values, and, traditionally, training in values was left to the home and church. But family and religion have had an increasingly small influence on young people. Few would deny that there are far too many students who are not clear what their lives are for or what is worth working for. This category includes students that teachers recognize as apathetic, flightly, uncertain, inconsistent, or who are drifters, overconformers, over dissenters, or role players.[2] Many underachievers, whose problems are not primarily physical or emotional, are also in

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this group. In viewing this complex set of problems, Louis Raths considered the implications of the literature of values development for teaching. Based on some of the work of John Dewey, Raths built a theory of values offering specific aid to teachers. In addition to the work of Dewey, values clarification has incorporated the work of many other philosophers, sociologists, and psychologists such as Gordon Allport, Edgar Friedenberg, Carl Rogers, Erich Fromm and others. But values clarification is essentially a teaching methodology and it has been developed, practiced, and popularized by many of Raths' students, particularly Dr. Sidney Simon.

Humanistic Goals: Values Clarification and Interpersonal Communication

In their article on interpersonal communication in The Speech Teacher, Arthur Bochner and Clifford Kelly state that their "...Major thesis is: all training in interpersonal skills should have as its objective the development of interpersonally competent individuals."[3] One of the assumptions essential to Bochner's and Kelly's framework is that every person is motivated to interact effectively with his or her environment. This assumption is consistent with the belief in the growth-promoting nature of human beings in humanistic psychology. Carl Rogers said, "I dare to believe that when the human being is inwardly free to choose whatever he deeply values, he tends to value those objects, experiences, and goals which make for his own survival, growth, and development and for the survival and development of others. I hypothesize that it is characteristic of the human organism to prefer such actualizing and socialized goals when he is exposed to a growth-promoting climate."[4]

In his book, Human Values in the Classroom: Teaching for Personal and Social Growth, Robert Hawley sharply focuses on the beliefs of Carl Rogers and others when he says, "It is the schools' chief function to produce socially self-actualizing people"[5] This statement points to Bochner's and Kelly's second

assumption that individuals are not effective at birth; we are asocial, neither effective nor ineffective. Social effectiveness is learned throughout life.[6]

Guidelines for teaching and curriculum planning come from research in a variety of areas. According to Bochner and Kelly, the research suggests that all effective interpersonal processes share a common core of characteristics which are, essentially, the ability to diagnose; the ability to understand the interpersonal context; and, the ability to act on one's understanding, effectuation.[7] Complete social effectiveness involves transformation of one's understanding into action.

These guidelines are also highly consistent with the processes of values clarification. Students are not only asked to choose values, but they are also asked to act upon them in a way that is consistent with other values in their lives. Louis Raths defined a value as "A personal guide that gives direction to life, helps us relate to the world and take purposeful action."[8]

The fourth goal common to values clarification and interpersonal communication is the mastery of a process. Speech communication education now places less emphasis on external, prescriptive standards of behavior and pays less attention to the product, "the speech," than to students' understanding of the various processes by which messages are encoded and decoded. Sharon Ratliffe and Deldee Herman, for example, state in their teachers guide to Adventures in the Looking Glass that the contemporary communication approach aims at identifying available options, determining which options are appropriate to each of us, communicating with ourselves and with others in order to achieve the desired option, making and living with a decision and having the courage to change it in the future. They state, furthermore, that the contemporary approach means that students seek out their own values and behavior. "What is 'right or wrong,' 'good or bad' for me takes precedence over, yet clearly takes

into consideration what others (or 'what society') tell me is appropriate behavior for me."

Simon and Harmin propose a method which shares many of the qualities described by Ratcliffe and Herman.[10] Rather than directly or indirectly teaching a fixed set of values, a traditional approach, values clarification emphasizes valuing, not values. Simon says, "We're very much opposed to the idea that values are something to be inculcated. What these courses offer is a process kids use to examine value systems and then select and reject elements from each."[11]

Values Clarification Process

Having explored some of the goals common to values clarification and to interpersonal communication studies, let us now consider the values clarification process itself. In Values Clarification and Teaching, Raths, Harmin, and Simon say, "In general, we might say that we apply critical thinking techniques to matters that are largely in the effective domain."[12] Thinking skills help students to discover alternatives and to predict possible outcomes of their choices, but valuing leads to making a choice and cherishing and prizing leads to sustaining the choice. There are seven criteria for a value. If one can meet all seven criteria, he or she holds a value. The criteria are:

1. Choosing from alternatives.
2. Choosing after careful consideration of the consequences of each alternative.
3. Choosing freely.
4. Prizing, being glad of one's choice.
5. Prizing, being willing to publicly affirm one's choice.
6. Acting upon one's choice, incorporating choices into behavior.
7. Acting upon one's choice repeatedly, over time.[13]

The choosing, prizing and acting process for valuing is incorporated into a variety of learning activities by which the student can come to learn more clearly those tenets on which he or she has explicitly or implicitly directed a life.

Speech Communication As a Function of Values Clarification.

Speech communication has many functions in the values clarification process. Raths, Harmin, and Simon offer an extensive description of one aspect of speech communication in values clarification, the class discussion on value-related issues.[14] Their discussion, emphasizing techniques that lead to wider usage than values clarification, offers specific examples of the value clarifying discussion, role playing, contrived incidents, the zig-zag lesson, the devil's advocate, and value continum. These and many more specific activities found in Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Teachers and Students are designed to stimulate thinking, talking, playing out, the consideration of alternative values held by others, and the choice of personal values.[15]

But valuing is not essentially group work. Simon et al. caution against the "noise" of defensiveness, arguing, student attempts to please the teacher, to "show off," to conform or to remain passive in discussions.[16] Robert Hawley underscores these notions when he says, "Improving communication skills, then, requires an awareness of the variety and scope of this 'noise' and skills for reducing and controlling 'noise' in the message."[17] Hawley defines noise as anything which channels energy away from the business of understanding and supporting.

Values clarification uses communication based activities as a means of discovering values and of exploring others' values, but the process of learning how to communicate effectively can also be a values clarification process in itself. In an article

entitled "Beyond Values Clarification," Howard Kirschenbaum says, "I realized how the goals of more effective communication and the ability to deal with one's feelings were as important as the choosing, prizing, and acting goals of values clarification. Simultaneously, Sid Simon and Merrill Harmin also were experiencing the power of verbal and nonverbal communication exercises in their work."[18]

Kirschenbaum further explores the function of speech when he discusses one of the seven valuing criteria: affirmation. Although affirmation is suitable for public settings, most of the values clarifying activities occur in dyadic or small group settings. When we are affirming, we are less concerned with the process of valuing than we are with the product. Affirmation has value for those who have an opportunity to clarify their values by listening to others, but not for the person engaged in the process. Kirschenbaum prefers to substitute "sharing" for affirmation as an intrinsically important part of the process for the person doing the valuing. Essentially, he defines "sharing" as the sharing of self or self disclosure. Self disclosure is a values clarifying process:

> First, we are social beings whose self-concept is developed through interaction with others. Only by sharing our inner selves with others and by receiving their rejection can we fully accept ourselves or deal with the aspects of ourselves which we, to some extent, reject. And if we do not accept ourselves, then neither can we become open to our inner experiences nor can we have the confidence to make our own choices. Secondly, self-disclosure has a clarifying effect. As we reveal outselves, we hear ourselves speak, we get others' reactions, we think "that's not exactly what I meant to say" or "I haven't conveyed what I'm really feeling or "next time I'd like to put it differently."[19]

Kirschenbaum concludes that since self-disclosure is essential to the values clarification process, then values clarification must be broadened "to include all those processes by which effective self-disclosure takes place-- in a word: communication... Verbal and nonverbal communication, the giving and receiving of feedback, sending clear messages, empathic listening-- all these processes and others foster self-disclosure and exposure to alternatives and, therefore, are part and parcel of the values-clarification process."[20]

Kirschenbaum also expands the traditional processes of choosing, prizing, and acting on values to include five major areas: Feeling, Thinking, Communicating, Choosing, and Acting.[21] Many of his subprocesses include areas traditionally taught in our own speech classes. The Feeling category, for example, includes openness to and acceptance of one's inner experience. Thinking includes distinguishing fact from opinion, supported from unsupported arguments, analyzing propaganda and stereotypes, and using logic. Communicating includes sending clear messages verbally and nonverbally, empathic listening, drawing out, asking questions, giving and receiving feedback, and conflict resolution. Choosing includes generating and considering alternatives, problem solving, data gathering and choosing. This listing might well be an outline for a curriculum with courses in intrapersonal and interpersonal communication, public speaking, propaganda, argumentation, and group discussion rather than an outline of processes of values clarification.

Values Clarification in Speech Communication Education

As the proponents of values clarification have searched for fuller dimensions in their methodology, speech communication educators might also look beyond the specific exercises and objectives of their teaching to study the implications of their work on the values clarifying of their students. An article in The

Speech Teacher, for example, states that, "Many of the exercises suggested by Sidney Simon, Leland Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum in Values Clarification can be used for enjoyment in the classroom-- providing a change of pace, a novelty effect, and tension relief-- as well as directing attention to specific areas of concern."[22] The "significant areas of concern" alluded to are not developed and are also, perhaps, overlooked by teachers.

Alton Barbour and Alvin Goldberg state in Interpersonal Communication: Teaching Strategies and Resources that, "The study of interpersonal communication allows for tremendous flexibility and resourcefulness in techniques and methods of teaching and learning."[23] Values clarification activities might not only provide a change of pace, but they might also offer a source of activities designed to illustrate the use of effective intrapersonal and interpersonal communication.

More important than merely incorporating specific values clarification exercises in their classes, however, teachers might become more mindful of the broader nature of their work in helping students to clarify and to act on personal values as they learn communication skills and principles. Advocates of values clarification call for a curriculum based on a tri-level pyramid. Facts are at the base; concepts at the center; values at the top. While mastering facts and dealing with concepts, students should be asked to relate learning to their own lives.

values
concepts
facts

> We have incorrectly assumed that the ability for rational and abstract thought also enables people to make value decisions. But cognitive ability does not automatically provide people with solutions to values problems. We have seen

> too many people who hold college degrees, but who are unfulfilled in their own lives, their marriages, their homes, and their jobs. We have also seen brilliant scholars contribute to the destruction of human life and the physical environment because they did not consider the consequences of their work, the lives of the humans affected, or the values their work encouraged.[24]

Clearly, knowledge or skill in the use of communication is not sufficient. The question remains how much teaching about communication exists in the cognitive realm. How do we use cognitive skills about communication to inform students' values in their uses of these skills? If we attempt to help students clarify personal values in the process of learning to communicate, it is also necessary to clarify values on the uses of communication skills once mastered. Barbour and Goldberg comment:

> Affective learning is every bit as important as cognitive learning, yet it has been ignored by the schools, as have the concerns for values. The teacher of interpersonal communication can hardly avoid dealing with the affective or emotional side of learning or trying to deal with the questions of values that such learning involves, even though there is no "right answer" to such questions.[25]

Teacher Communication

Having examined some of the ways in which values clarification and speech communication are related to students' learning, let us now consider their

functions in the teaching process. Although students are often involved in group work, projects and other independent activities, the teacher still structures learning, shares knowledge and sets the tone of openness, trust, and honesty while motivating students to do work that is demanding and rigorous. Barbour and Goldberg state:

> Fundamentally... the teacher must be able to facilitate learning, to provide information, to stimulate face-to-face experiences which place responsibility for learning on the students, to identify and utilize resources in the class for information and insight, and, most importantly, to practice what he preaches about the ways in which individuals relate to and communicate with one another.[26]

Raths, et al., include a lengthy discussion of a particular type of teacher communication, the value clarifying response.[27] Essentially, this is a way of responding to students in order to encourage them to consider what they are choosing, prizing, or doing. Like other constructive feedback, it is not evaluative, but it stimulates the students to think about values. "Did you think about the alternatives yet?" "Have you done anything about that?" "What are some of the good points about this?" The values clarifying response is very brief, but it offers the teacher another communication strategy, another reminder about the numbers of ways teacher communication can be used effectively.

Summarizing the role of the teacher in the classroom, Harmin et al. have listed some of the teacher behaviors that seem to promote effective values clarification. Like those discussed by Barbour and Goldberg for the interpersonal communication behavior, especially to listening, offering feedback, and questioning, rather than the traditional teacher communication, "telling," values clarification is effective

when a teacher

- is accepting and nonjudgmental
- encourages diversity; realizes that there are no absolute right or wrong answers for another's value questions
- respects the individual's choice to participate or not
- respects the individual's response
- encourages each person to answer honestly
- listens and raises clarifying questions with students
- avoids questions which may threaten or limit thinking
- raises questions of both personal and social concern.[28]

Evaluation of Learning

In addition to the problems of dealing with a variety of cognitive and affective experiences, clarifying values and structuring appropriate learning activities, the teacher is also faced with the problems of evaluation. Some difficulties center around the fact that it is sometimes easier to evaluate some of the lower cognitive skills than conceptual or affective learning. Other problems arise because we do not have a precise theoretical definition of personal growth for adolescence against which progress may be measured. Furthermore, the acid test of one's ability to use communication or values effectively comes in one's life, lived largely outside the classroom. Another difficulty is that humanistic education stresses role-free, nonjudgmental, and open communication between teachers and students. Traditional grading systems in which the locus of evaluation is in the teacher's judgment on the student's cognitive classroom output, which is in competition with other student's work, is inimical to all that we have been discussing.

Although evaluation is always a fragile operation, there are methods by which the scalpel is used less

painfully and more profitably, without leaving "scars." First, the teacher must be aware of the subtle power to evaluate positively or negatively in feedback. A brief, immediate response can signal support and reinforcement as easily as it can sound a doomsday knell to a student. Second, for all students, especially for those who choose "to pass" on class activities, there must exist the opportunity to demonstrate both their learning of communication principles and their understanding of the possible application of the principles to their lives. Since student comments are necessarily based on subjective experience, the teacher might establish criterion-referenced standards such as the following for student reports. "First, your comments must be clearly stated. Second, they must be clearly related to a concept in the text. Third, they must show a possible application to your life."

For unit, module, or course work, the teacher and students might establish a clearly delineated contingency contracting system where students know the quantity and quality of work to be done at specific intervals in the course for the contracted grade. Throughout the course, self-rating, peer ratings, teacher-ratings, feedback sessions or conferences can be arranged. Finally, evaluation of one's development in the process of learning rests with the student. The teacher should be less concerned with the behavioral "objections" approach and more concerned with behavior that is supportive of positive learning, objective self and teacher evaluation, and authentic personal growth.[29]

Conclusion

In the speech communication classroom, values clarification activities can be used as motivational techniques and as methods for teaching interpersonal communication skills. More importantly, however, learning to use communication skills can be a values clarifying process in itself, especially in inter-

personal communication. But it can also occur in other speech areas treated as primarily cognitive; argumentation, persuasion, discussion, public address, etc. For not only can personal values be clarified in the process of learning to communicate and interact with others, but social values can and should also be clarified on the uses of facts, skills and concepts, once mastered.

Teacher communication is important in the broadest sense since a positive and supportive climate must be created. No longer merely cognitive masters of communication theory, teachers must be able to apply effective interpersonal skills to their own teaching and recognize that many of their skills will be listening, responding, questioning, as well as informing, and "telling."

Finally, evaluation, always a difficult area, can be approached using principles consistent with personal growth and can range from simple and subtle experiences, such as offering brief feedback responsese, to a highly developed set of criterion-referenced assignments or contracts. Whatever the method, the purpose is to enhance students' learning and growth.

This paper establishes a framework in which speech communication teachers might consider values clarification as a focus whose impact is already discernible in our texts and teaching. Both areas have much to offer each other as academic disciplines, and this reciprocal relationship should concern us as teachers.

Notes

[1]For example, see R.R. Allen, Sharol Parish, and C. David Mortensen, Communications: Interaction Through Speech (Columbus; Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Co., 1974); Kathleen Galvin and Cassandra Book, Person to Person: An Introduction to Speech Communication (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1973); David W. Johnson, Reaching Out: Interpersonal Effectiveness and Self Actualization (Englewood Cliffs, N.J.: Prentice-Hall, Inc., 1972); Sharon Ratcliffe and Deldee Herman, Adventures in the Looking Glass: Experiencing Communication with Yourself and Others (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Company, 1974); John Stewart and Gary D'Angelo, Together: Communicating Interpersonally (Reading, Mass.: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1975); Charles A. Wilkinson, Speaking of . . . Communication (Glenview, Ill.: Scott, Foresman and Company, 1975).

[2]Louis E. Raths, Merrill Harmin, and Sidney B. Simon, Values and Teaching (Columbus, Ohio: Charles E. Merrill Publishing Company, 1966), p. 7.

[3]Arthur Bochner and Clifford Kelly, "Interpersonal Competence: Rationale, Philosophy, and Implementation of a Conceptual Framework," The Speech Teacher, 23 (November, 1974), 286.

[4]Carl Rogers, "Toward a Modern Approach to Values: The Valuing Process in the Mature Person," in Readings in Values Clarification ed. by Sidney Simon and Howard Kirschenbaum (Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1973), p. 89.

[5]Robert C. Hawley, Human Values in the Classroom: Teaching for Personal and Social Growth, (Amherst, Mass.: ERA Press, 1973), p. 7.

[6]Bochner and Kelly, p. 288.

[7]Ibid., p. 289.

[8]Sidney Simon, "Sid Simon on Values: No Moralizers or Manipulators Allowed," Nation's Schools (December, 1973), 40.

[9]Sharon Ratliffe and Delde- Herman, Adventures in the Looking Glass, Teacher's Guide (Skokie, Ill.: National Textbook Company, Inc., 1974), p. 3.

[10]Merrill Harmin and Sidney Simon, "Values," in Readings in Values Clarification, pp. 4-16.

[11]Sidney Simon, "Sid Simon on Values," Nation's Schools, 40.

[12]Raths, Harmin and Merrill, Values and Teaching, p. 9.

[13]Ibid., p. 259.

[14]Ibid., pp. 112-130.

[15]Sidney Simon, Leland Howe, and Howard Kirschenbaum, Values Clarification: A Handbook of Practical Strategies for Students and Teachers (New York: Hart Publishing Company, Inc., 1972).

[16]Raths, Harmin, and Simon, Values and Teaching, pp. 106-107.

[17]Hawley, Human Values in the Classroom, p. 39.

[18]Howard Kirschenbaum, "Beyond Values Clarification," in Readings in Values Clarification, p. 94.

[19]Ibid., p. 101.

[20]Ibid.

[21]Ibid., pp. 102-[illegible].

[22]Richard Weaver, "The Uses of Exercises and Games," The Speech Teacher, 23 (November, 1974), 303.

[23]Alton Barbour and Alvin Goldberg, Interpersonal Communication: Teaching Strategies and Resources, (New York: ERIC/RCS Speech Communication Module, Speech Communication Association, 1974), p. 5.

[24]Merrill Harmin, Howard Kirschenbaum, and Sidney Simon, Clarifying Values Through Subject Matter (Minneapolis: Winston Press, Inc., 1973), p. 23.

[25]Barbour and Goldberg, Interpersonal Communication, p. 54.

[26]Ibid., p. 5.

[27]Raths, Harmin, and Simon, Values and Teaching, pp. 51-82.

[28]Harmin, Krischenbaum, and Simon, Clarifying Values Through Subject Matter, pp. 37-38.

[29]For a more complete discussion of evaluation procedures see, "Selected Approaches to Speech Communication Evaluation: A Symposium," in The Speech Teacher, 24 (March, 1975), 127-150.

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